
OSAMA BEN SALEH

THE VISIONARY ARCHITECT OF SAUDI ARABIA'S FINTECH RENAISSANCE



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In an era defined by disruption, few individuals have demonstrated the foresight, resilience, and ingenuity of Osama Ben Saleh. A trailblazer in every sense, Osama has spent nearly three decades not just navigating change—but commanding it. From building Saudi Arabia's earliest digital banking infrastructure to redefining the future of fintech through his company, Alfaris International Group - FIG, his journey is one of relentless innovation, national impact, and global significance.

Now recognized in the Forbes Unstoppable Leaders Edition, Osama's story is a testament to how one man's vision can spark a movement, transform an industry, and empower a nation.

Building Tomorrow, today: A Career Forged in Innovation

Osama began his career in 1996 at the Saudi American Bank (SAMBA), a Citibank affiliate, during the early stages of digital finance. With a degree



in Computer Science from King Saud University, he played a role in developing digital banking solutions. Osama worked at several banks, including Banque Saudi Fransi, Arab National Bank, and National Commercial Bank (now SNB). He contributed to the development of Transaction Banking in the banking industry in Saudi Arabia.

He was behind Saudi Arabia's first corporate online banking systems, the first national corporate collection platform, the first Host-to-Host (H2H) banking integration, and the first eWallet for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with a leading Saudi bank. These milestones weren't incremental improvements, they were industry-defining moments that laid the foundation for the Kingdom's modern financial ecosystem.

"We weren't just digitizing banking—we were redefining trust, access, and experience," Osama reflects.

With each milestone, Osama Ben Saleh reshapes the narrative of what's possible in fintech—not just in Saudi Arabia, but across the globe. His relentless drive, future-first thinking, and ability to bring systems, people, and possibilities together makes him a true Unstoppable Leader.

As Saudi Arabia rises as a fintech powerhouse, Osama's legacy is already written into the code of the nation's financial future. And he's far from done.

Leadership Without Limits: From Policy to Platforms

In 2012, Osama was appointed Head of the Banking Committee at the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Saudi Arabia—a position that amplified his influence from boardrooms to policy rooms. There, he led dialogues on digital regulation, open banking, and financial inclusion, setting the stage for Saudi Arabia's transformation into a global fintech leader.

Yet, advocacy was just one facet of his ambition. In 2006, Osama founded Alfaris International Group (FIG)—a technology powerhouse focused on fusing traditional finance with frontier technologies. Under his leadership, FIG has become synonymous with trust, innovation, and bold execution, supporting both government transformation initiatives and the fintech startup ecosystem.

FIG IN ACTION: BUILDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE

1. Payment Service Hub (PSH)

At the heart of Saudi Arabia's digital payment revolution is FIG's cloud-native Payment Service Hub, one of the world's first SaaS PSH platforms. Hosted on Saudi Arabia's leading cloud infrastructure:

- The majority of the digital banks have adopted FIG's PSH.
- Designed for scale, agility, and compliance, PSH enables seamless payment orchestration across channels and partners.

2. B2B, Open Banking & BaaS

Anticipating the rise of Open Finance, Osama positioned FIG as a regional leader in Banking as a Service (BaaS):

- 260+ pre-integrated APIs
- Supports 46 fintech business models, covering more than 85% of use cases in Saudi Arabia
- Trusted by banks, startups, and enterprises to accelerate innovation without rebuilding from scratch

3. Bank Ready Program

Launching a digital bank often requires more than two years and millions in setup costs. Osama changed the game with Bank Ready:

- A modular, pre-validated digital banking environment ready to go live in nine months or less
- Partnerships with core banking, payments, AML, mobile apps, and card providers
- Cuts costs significantly and reduces go-live risk dramatically

4. Ideal.sa: The B2B Super platform

FIG's Ideal.sa is not just a marketplace—it's a fintech-enabled economic engine:

- A Public-Private Partnership platform integrating procurement, financing, and supply chain
- Empowers SMEs to compete with large players globally
- "It's Alibaba meets LinkedIn, with the power of SAP Ariba," says Osama



5. Fintech Ready Program (Blankly)

As part of the national Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia wants 525 fintechs live by 2030. Osama's answer? A plug-and-play launchpad that gets startups running in days, not months.

- Pre-configured infrastructure with cybersecurity, eKYC, government APIs, and banking rails
- Transforms setup time from months to days
- Opens the doors of opportunity to innovators, not just incumbents

Now, Osama is building the region's first all-in-one SaaS + BaaS platform, designed to unify fragmented services and slash time-to-market by at least 70%, significantly reduce costs, and unleash a new generation of financial tools—from wallets to compliance engines—in record time.

A Vision Rooted in Purpose

For Osama, fintech is more than code—it's empowerment. His mission is to democratize access to financial services, create jobs, and drive inclusion at scale.

"Innovation is only meaningful when it uplifts lives and expands possibilities," he affirms.

That's why every FIG initiative is aligned with Vision 2030—from SME empowerment to building sovereign digital infrastructure.

Legacy in the Making

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As Saudi Arabia rises as a fintech powerhouse, Osama's legacy is already written into the code of the nation's financial future. And he's far from done.

"The road to transformation isn't easy—but it's worth it when you're building a better tomorrow."

— Osama Ben Saleh